

Mastering Recovery

A Newsletter on Long-Term Sobriety

#24 -- December 15, 2021

Minding Your Mindset

I can learn new things and do things I never thought possible.

What I'm Thinking

A growth mindset is essential to long-term recovery. Without a growth mindset we can easily find ourselves hopelessly stuck.

The opposite of a growth mindset, of course, is a fixed mindset. With a fixed mindset we believe that we have been given only so much talent, just a small and particular set of skills, and a limit to what we can do with those skills. We then spend our lives bumping up against those limits and turning away. "I guess I can't do that. I just don't have the skills." We believe our ability quota is carved in stone.

- With a fixed mindset, we tend to devalue ourselves because we can't do what others do.
- The roadblocks in our path prove our lack of ability and skill- and there is nothing we can do about it.
- That becomes a feeling of being deprived of what other people seem to have naturally.
- As a result we end up with a lower self-esteem.
- That can finally end up as lack of confidence that we can make good choices.

On the other hand, with a growth mindset

- we tend to see the obstacles in our path as opportunities to learn and grow.
- We can develop new ways of dealing with things and increase our abilities.
- We believe that it's never too late to learn.
- We accept that it is okay to fail at something. Failure means we can learn something.

It sounds a great deal like the old "power of positive thinking," but then goes far beyond that to positive action. The possibilities of a growth mindset are

actually embedded in the brain science and brain plasticity. Just because you haven't done something yet, does not mean that you can't learn. The best way to change is to act your way into a new way of thinking, which uses the brain plasticity to rewire and upgrade your brain.



Facing Challenges - Building Recovery

If someone had asked you in December 2020 whether you would be able to put up with another year of a pandemic, would you have said you couldn't?

- Take a few moments in the next week and do a self-inventory of what you had to learn to do differently in 2021 that you would never have believed possible?

You may be tempted to say, "But I had no choice. I had to do it!" But you did it! And many other new things in 2021. You may have thought about giving up, gotten depressed, angry, or just plain exhausted. You may even have quit for a few hours or even days. (That can be call self-care, by the way.) But you have made it. Some of us are worse for the wear, but all of us may very well have learned something.

- Take a few more inventory moments and make a list of the skills you used to be successful at 2021. Don't be falsely humble. You had skills you used. List them. In that list, make sure you include some of the ways you did healthy self-care.

"Yes, but..." is not a hopeful response. You faced changes and you made it.

One more inventory activity for you.

- Make a list of two things that you would like to have done better. They are not "failures." Shift the mindset to see them as learning experiences. Look at your list of skills and think how you might be able to use one of those skills to deal with the things that could have gone better.

That's how mastery of life works. Celebrate the advances, find your skills, admit your shortcomings, apply your skills to move forward.

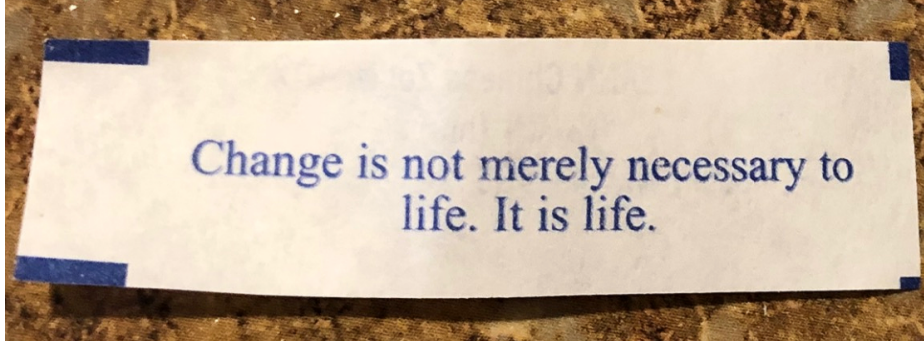
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Quote and Picture of the Week



Fortune Cookie Truth

Without a growth mindset, we will often fight change of any kind.

Tools and Resources

** Skill Packs website has a resource of 17 growth mindset activities for adults to explore. It helps inspire curiosity and growth.

[Skill Packs Adult Activities](#)

** Develop Good Habits has a number of helpful pages. Here is a link to 7 activities for adults:

[Develop Good Habits Adult Exercises.](#)

** Positive Psychology has a page filled with ideas and resources. Take some time to look though them. Your recovery can only grow stronger.

[Positive Psychology Mindset Activities](#)

In 2022

- I will be looking to many of you for ideas on how I can help you grow in your mastery mindset. Watch for some surveys, ideas, and new resources.
- Feel free to share this newsletter with friends and colleagues.

As always feel free to [email me](#) with comments or questions.

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